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ABSTRACT

Originally a federally-funded organization created to serve migrant families in the 16 counties of Western Kansas, the Kansas Council of Agricultural Workers and Low-Income Families (KCAW-LIF) marked the first major effort to cope with the problems of migrant life by providing basic services at public cost. A survey of 245 migrant families was conducted from June through August 1972 in 10 of the 16 counties served by KCAW-LIF. Farmworkers were classified as seasonal, farm, and nonfarm residents. The analysis unit was the family; the family's principle breadwinner was interviewed. Since Chicanos comprised the largest segment of migrants, those interviewed were Mexican American. A questionnaire designed in English and Spanish was administered to obtain data concerning: citizenship, family size, education, language facility, religion, settling out, living and working conditions, service availability, and basic migrant attitudes about services. Interviewers were 14 local bilingual Chicanos with experience as farmworkers in the survey area. Some findings were: (1) jobs and legal services were most often cited as being needed; (2) more families knew of the availability of services than had actually used them; and (3) 57.9 percent of the migrant families indicated that they would settle out in Kansas if permanent work were available, and 37.7 percent said they would not settle out in Kansas. (NQ)

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THE KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY:
AN INTERPRETIVE PROFILE OF
THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN MIGRANT FAMILY

By

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and
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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The Institute for Social
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PREFACE

This study was conducted under the auspices of the Research Development Internship Program of the Council of State Governments. It was conducted in cooperation with the following organization and agencies:

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Kansas Migrant Survey

FOREWORD

This is the first data collecting effort designed to describe the conditions which surround the rural farmworker and characterize migrant life in Kansas. The study focuses on Mexican-Americans because they constitute the largest single segment of rural hand laborers and migrants in the State.

This is an interpretive report because the authors have chosen to provide insights which they have gained from field and related experience in an effort to include those qualitative aspects of the life of the rural laborer which are not always obvious from the data presented. These insights along with the evidence provided by the data will hopefully let the reader reach an independent appraisal of the problems of migrant life in Kansas.

Finally, it is hard to be objective about poverty or impersonal about the plight of the less fortunate. The story, however, must be told if people are to become generally aware of the conditions, concerns and problems of farm labor life in Kansas. It is hoped that this profile is a first step in the direction of helping Kansans to recognize and cope with the implications of life in the migrant stream.

Herman D. Lujan
Director

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INTRODUCTION

We often hear of the plight of the poor in a time when concern for general social welfare is a critical issue. If we are to understand the problems of the poor we must first come to know something about the day-to-day living conditions they endure and the life situations which they must face while lacking the resources available to the rest of society for making a livelihood.

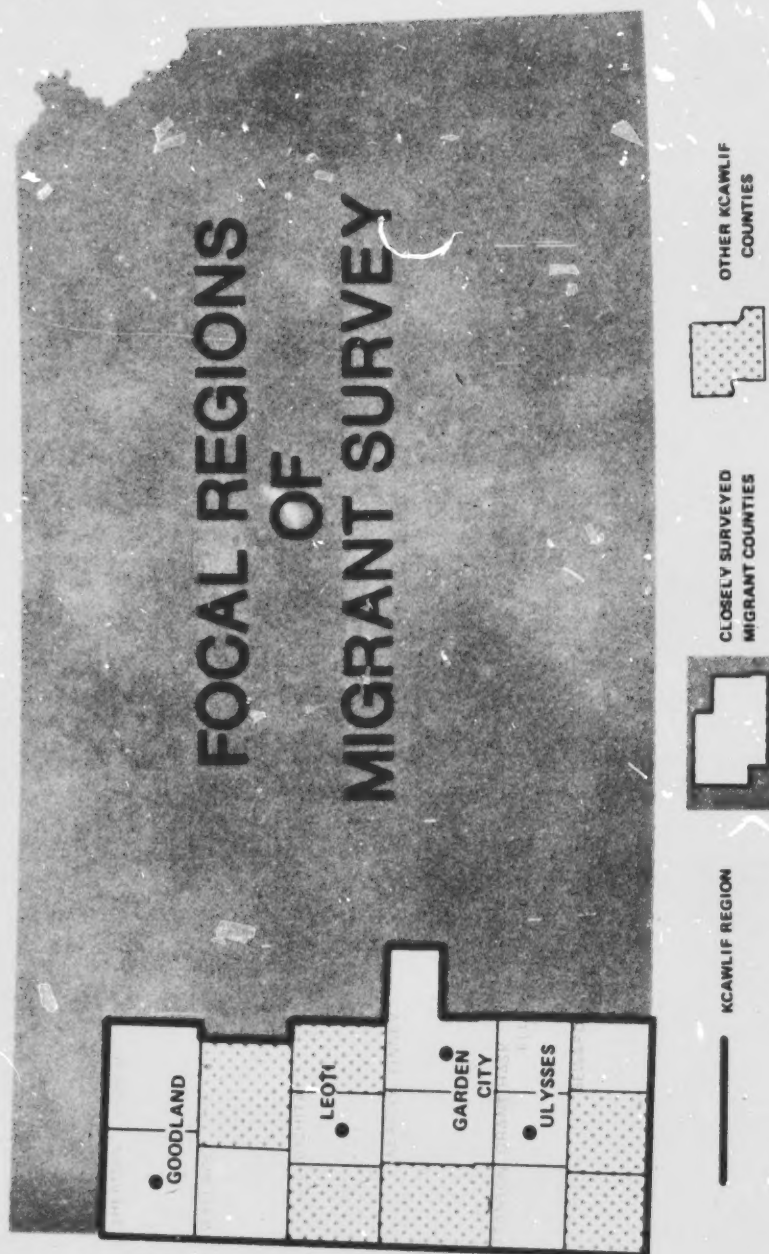
Among the poor of the land, the migrants are often the forgotten people. In Kansas there are few who would on first impression consider migrant workers as a major element of the population. Consequently, their life situations and needs become matters of secondary interest and concern. Information about migrants is scarce. Descriptive information about migrant family life is virtually non-existent. This condition prompted this study of migrant family life in Western Kansas.

Until 1970 migrant life in Kansas went unnoticed by the larger population. Residents of Western Kansas who saw the migrants during the summer crop season knew of them only by their migrant camps and transient life style. Since migrants kept to themselves, few Kansans were familiar with the problems and needs of Kansas migrants.

The Kansas Council of Agricultural Workers and Low-Income Families (KCAW-LIF), originally a federally-funded organization, was created in 1970 to serve migrant families in the sixteen counties of Western Kansas where they lived and worked. It marked the first major effort to cope with the problems of migrant life by providing basic services at public cost. The Council offers a Headstart program, an Adult Basic Education program, Migrant Upgrading Services, and Emergency Food and Medical Services through area offices in Leoti, Ulysses, Garden City and Goodland, Kansas (see Figure 1).

From April to July each year an estimated 700 to 1,000 families come through Kansas on the migrant stream to harvest sugar beets and milo, as well as other small crops. Texas is the home base for most of

FIGURE 1



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these families who stop in Kansas and then go on to Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota following the crops.

Data about the specifics of migrant life are scarce. There is general agreement, throughout, that their housing situations, wages, and working conditions are substandard. It seems that migrants are left to choose from the leftovers of the majority population when it comes to jobs, houses and other consumer goods. With sporadic income, lower levels of education and a non-resident living pattern, they become economically and socially ostracized. Their lives fall subject to the whimsy of the weather and subsequent crop conditions. As transient residents with jobs that are temporary and unpredictable, they have little access to basic social services. Essential services like health care and schooling are inadequate if available. Few schools exist for migrant children who come to Kansas during the months when school is not in session. For the majority population, health care is a matter for the private sector and is to be handled at patient cost. Migrants cannot afford such services and so they go without them. Because of the lack of outreach-services designed to contact and serve a mobile population, migrants suffer. In many cases the language barrier further complicates the situation. As our data will show, the majority of migrant farmworkers in this part of Kansas are Mexican-Americans who are predominantly Spanish-speaking. With poor English facility they are often unaware of services if they exist or find such services difficult to use when they know of their availability.

Because the migrant population is mobile, migrants were not included in the 1970 census for this area of Kansas. Similarly, they are not systematically included in the annual census of the State Board of Agriculture. This study is intended as a preliminary effort to document migrant living conditions, the availability and use of social services and the identification of basic migrant needs. The data from this study will also provide an initial basis for the Kansas Council of Agricultural Workers and Low-Income Families to evaluate its current programs and design new ones for economic development among migrants, the

relocation of families, and the provision of health, education and legal aid services.

These data on migrant families are also valuable to the local agencies that serve migrants in various ways. They will increase the general knowledge of local migrant conditions and provide some basis for enhancing community support of migrant programs. Four major bills relating to Kansas migrant farmworkers were introduced but defeated by committee votes or inaction in the 1972 session of the Kansas Legislature. The failure of legislative action was due in part to unfamiliarity with the difficult conditions facing migrant workers. This reflects the scarcity of data already discussed and emphasizes the need for information about migrant life in a format which is of value and utility to legislators and policy-makers.

It has been estimated that in five years migrant labor may no longer be utilized in crop production in the State of Kansas because of increasing mechanization in farming techniques as well as the use of pesticides. Nationally, between 20 and 30 percent of the migrant workers are dropping out of the migrant stream each year. If this is the case, there is an obvious need to create channels for the permanent economic stabilization of those who leave the migrant stream and to provide access for them into the stable resident sector of American life.

While data will not design programs or generate needed policy responses they can help define the problem in more specific terms. This is the purpose of the data descriptions which follow.

THE FIELD SURVEY

The present study was a sample survey of migrant families conducted during the summer of 1972 in 10 of the 16 counties in Western Kansas served by the KCAW-LIF: Finney, Seward, Stanton, Haskell, Kearney, Wallace, Grant, Wichita, Sherman and Thomas. Most of the 245 families included in the survey were concentrated around Leoti, Ulysses, Garden City and Goodland.

The sampling procedure was designed to provide the opportunity to interview at least 10 percent of the migrant families and an equivalent number of non-farm families. In addition, a small number of no more than 30 resident non-migrant families from the study area who had "settled out" of the migrant stream were included. The actual type of sampling method used has been referred to as "scope" sampling because it focuses upon all the various sorts of cases, in this instance migrant families, which occur.¹ Our population of concern is the migrant farmworker either in the migrant stream or settling out of it. Because Chicanos make up the largest segment of migrants, and since farmworkers may be classified as seasonal, farm resident, and non-farm resident, these were the characteristics taken into consideration in forming the sample. The method used deliberately sought to cover the range of migrant farmworker circumstances, that is, maximizing the types of migrant families studied and thereby having a limited number representing each type. This method was used in preference to one which would include a large number of families but would cover only a small number of the various migrant circumstances. For this latter technique, a random sample of a much larger size would have been appropriate. Finally, the concern in this sampling method used was not to provide

¹ Willer, David. *Scientific Sociology: Theory and Method*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.

data for statistical inference to some broader population of migrants, but to provide some systematic basis to accurately describe the Western Kansas migrant condition.

The unit of analysis was the family, defined as those who share a common dwelling unit, and care was taken to interview only one member of each family. The preferred person to be interviewed was the principle breadwinner of the family and efforts were made to reach him first at his residence and if he could not be found there, to contact him in the field. If for some reason the breadwinner, who was usually the oldest male in the family, could not be located for an interview, the next best person for interviewing was thought to be the wife or a young adult. The actual decision of who the alternative interviewee would be required some weighing of factors by the interviewer for a particular situation. To do this, characteristics such as age, sex, educational attainment and knowledge of money matters were taken into consideration.

A questionnaire (see Appendix I) was designed in English and Spanish to obtain data concerning: (1) demographic characteristics, (2) household/living conditions, (3) migration patterns, (4) working conditions, (5) service availability, and (6) basic migrant attitudes about services. All information was gathered by family unit through interviews conducted in Spanish. Translation into Spanish presented some difficulty in vocabulary consistency because of idiomatic variations, but the bilingual interviewers were able to modify technical terms and phrases and enhance understanding among the respondents.

Fourteen bilingual Chicano interviewers were trained to conduct the survey. The interviewers were local residents from the Garden City, Kansas area with experience as farmworkers in the ten-county field survey area. They were familiar with the services available in each area and the location of the migrant camps. The project director trained them in interviewing techniques and in the referral of families to social service agencies where interviewers identified the need for particular services. Interviewers were instructed to: (1) administer the survey questionnaire,

(2) determine, through the interview, the service needs of the family, and
(3) refer families to local agencies which had the resources to meet those identified needs. Training of the interviewers was conducted over a two-week period.

The advantages of using local, experienced farmworkers as interviewers were considerable. They reduced the time spent locating families; they provided a time framework for the field survey based on knowledge of past crop schedules and their relation to each target area; and they were familiar with specific key information such as units of pay, hours/work patterns, crop type, and related farm terminology essential to successful interviews. The knowledge of crop schedules maximized contact with available migrants. Knowledge of the local idiom meant greater understanding between interviewer and respondent in each locale. The interviewers also had personal contacts, through family and friends, in many of the areas so that they did not encounter major hostility when seeking out a group or entering a migrant camp. They were able to establish immediate rapport with families which, in some cases, seemed greater than existing relationships between the families and local service agency workers. Another positive factor was the high level of interviewer enthusiasm and commitment, even when often working in uncondusive situations such as in a field or beside a road. The interviewers were between the ages of 16 and 22, and were able to travel the long distances needed to seek out families. The team of interviewers frequently had to spend nights out on the road because of irregular work patterns of the migrant families. In sum, they were able to establish confidence and credibility among the families they interviewed, were able to assist them, were willing to listen and empathize, and were able to accurately record information about the experiences of the families they interviewed. All of these were tasks which would have been impossible for outsiders to fulfill adequately.

The approach used for selecting those to be interviewed was to first contact the migrant school in the area for an estimate of the number of

migrant families in the region and then to follow the school bus route to locate the families. Through the Title I program, 12 migrant schools were opened throughout the State of Kansas during the summer of 1972. The Migrant Health Service also assisted in locating families where there were no known camps in the area. This was necessary if the sample was to include isolated families who were still part of the migrant stream. Another method for locating families who did not live in camps was by referrals gained from other families being interviewed. There was some reluctance to give names of other people because interviewers were occasionally suspected of being immigration authorities, local law enforcement agents, or even welfare workers. Among migrants such authorities are often perceived as bothersome if not as a direct threat. There are always concerns over matters of residency, authorization for non-citizen workers and related legalities which increase migrant sensitivities toward officials in general.

From June 1972 through August 1972, the interviewers made their contacts and visited families making Garden City their base of operations. Half of the time was spent in the office planning the next interview trip, contacting sources of information about the location of migrants, tabulating the results of previous interviews, and providing follow-up assistance to contacted families.

Early in the summer the interviewers worked in pairs when on the road interviewing. It became evident that after gaining experience interviewers were able to work alone. In addition, there was general agreement that responses were more open and more easily obtained when only one person approached a family. Because of the sensitivity of migrant families toward dealing with strangers or officials, interviewers could appear more casual and gain their confidence by working alone. At all times the interviewers were instructed to rephrase or explain questions that may have been vague or unfamiliar in Spanish because of the problems of translation. Some questions on the questionnaire were modified to clarify their meaning and several were eliminated altogether,

either because they were too ambiguous or they elicited negative and hostile attitudes from respondents and affected their responses to the whole questionnaire. Answers to these questions are not included in this report.

THE MIGRANT CONDITION

The Kansas Migrant Survey included a broad scope of farmworkers characteristic of the farm laborers in Western Kansas. Those surveyed were seasonal workers (migrants, primarily from out-of-state), resident workers (those with an intent to remain in Kansas—usually these were intrastate migrants), and non-farm resident workers. This last group included those who were in the process of settling out of the migrant stream by living and working in towns and doing occasional farm work to supplement their income. Other worker classification systems could not be adapted for this study. For example, it was impossible to classify the families according to accepted OEO migrant definitions of three-month migrant agricultural worker, twelve-month migrant seasonal worker, and five-year or less resident farmworker. These classifications did not provide for useful distinctions among those who intended to leave the migrant stream, work distinctions among those families who claimed a permanent home address, the effects of uncertain work availability, and the unpredictable mobility of migrants caused by changing periods of farm and non-farm work opportunities.

A comprehensive classification scheme cannot easily be applied to families involved in farm work. The simple method used in this survey to classify such families seemed more reflective of the variety of work-residence patterns encountered in Western Kansas. The three "work-residence" classes are described as follows: (1) migrant or seasonal, (2) resident farmworker, and (3) non-farm resident. The migrant group contained 114 families who had been in Kansas for six months or less and intended to return to their permanent homes after the harvest season (see Table I). Migrant families were the largest group and represented 46.5 percent of the total sample. While living a migrant way of life, 58 percent indicated that they desired to leave the migrant stream and settle in Kansas.

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TABLE I
 Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
 On Selected Residence Characteristics

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Number of families</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Migrant	114	46.5
Non-migrant	131	53.5
Resident farmworker	27	11.0
Non-farm resident worker	104	42.5
Total	245	100.0

	<u>Months</u>			
<u>Length of Kansas residence</u>	<u>1-4</u>	<u>5-12</u>	<u>13-36</u>	<u>37 +</u>
Migrant	90.4	4.4	1.8	3.5
Non-migrant	5.3	4.6	19.8	70.2
Resident farmworker	3.7	0.0	22.2	74.1
Non-farm resident worker	5.8	5.8	19.2	69.2

The non-migrant families in the sample were classified as two types—the resident farmworker and the non-farm resident worker. The resident farmworker group included those who had been in Kansas longer than six months but less than five years and who usually expressed the intent to stay in Kansas while making their living primarily from farm work. This group numbered 27. Non-farm resident families were all residents who had lived in Kansas for more than five years and were making their living by a combination of farm and non-farm work. Their farm work involved occasionally working in the fields during the summer. They were characterized by the desire to completely settle out of the migrant stream and preferred non-farm work as their primary economic activity. In sum, they were the low-income Chicano townspeople whose lives and work remain at the mercy of fluctuations in the urban job market and weather conditions affecting supplementary farm jobs. The non-farm residents were the second largest group, numbering 104 families. There was overlap among these groups and even among members of a single family, so the groups cannot be considered mutually exclusive. This condition is characteristic of the migrant family whose life style is dictated largely by the availability of work. It must be noted here that all families interviewed were Mexican-American except for one Anglo family living in a migrant camp. The head of this family was a tractor operator who followed the crops seeking tractor work. (For a detailed breakdown of the work classification for the various work-residence groups see Table XIV.)

Citizenship

As a first step in describing migrant farmworkers, an inquiry was made into the legal citizenship of all family members in the families interviewed (see Table II). This revealed that 59 families or 24.1 percent of the total had mixed citizenship, that is, some family members were Mexican citizens and some held American citizenship. Usually the young

children were American citizens because they were born in the U.S., and the parents and some of the older children were born in Mexico and were Mexican citizens. Only eight families openly claimed that they were all Mexican citizens. But this number could be low because of a general reluctance among migrants to admit their alien legal status. Because of

TABLE II
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
According to Country of Citizenship

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>United States</u>	<u>Mexico</u>	<u>Both</u>
Migrant	75.4	2.6	21.9
Non-migrant	70.3	3.8	25.9
Resident farmworker	70.4	3.7	25.9
Non-farm resident worker	70.2	3.8	26.0
Total	72.7	3.3	24.1

immigration laws most migrants prefer to remain silent about their citizenship. This became clear early in the survey when interviewers encountered hostility from families who suspected that they were immigration or law enforcement authorities, or perhaps even "informers." Alien status sometimes proves to be a cruel fact for a family when the authorities conduct raids on camps to roundup the "illegals" ("wetbacks" or "*mojados*") and send them back to Mexico. This always separates family members and for this reason is a consequence to be avoided. This explains why the conclusion is that the survey data may underestimate the actual number of Mexican citizens in the Kansas migrant stream.

Family Size

Table III shows that the family size of the sample ranged from 1 to 16, the mean being 6.6 members per family. A family of one was rare and indicated the occasional single man following the crops while leaving his family at home or, as in two cases, the retired man who lived alone. The mean number of children per family was 4.7 with a 3.0 standard deviation. The large family size of six-plus members, compared to the national average of four family members indicates that the rural family is a functional work unit. More children mean more hands which in turn lead to more pay. Family size becomes even more important when one considers the plight of the migrant family. That family leads a transient and uncertain life with long hours, varying and stressful working conditions, and very low wages. Here the children may either work in the fields, help the family at home, take small jobs in the area to provide supplementary income or in some other way contribute to the total family income. The profile then is of a complex multi-functional family unit which coordinates its every talent to make a living.

TABLE III
Mean Family Size of Kansas Migrant Sample

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>
Migrant	7.4	3.237
Non-migrant	5.7	2.661
Resident farmworker	6.3	2.658
Non-farm resident worker	5.8	2.698
Total	6.6	3.041

Education

Child labor laws supposedly prohibit children under 14 years of age from working in the fields; but when an entire family is contracted and travels as a unit the law tends to be overlooked. It is, of course, an economic advantage to both the family and the grower that this be the case. Summer migrant schools are one alternative to child labor. Established by a Title I grant, there were 12 migrant schools in operation during the summer of 1972 in the State of Kansas. They provided a total program of bilingual class instruction, recreation, and both lunch and bus service for 1,367 migrant children. The program served as a source of contact with migrant families and also continued the education of the children.

Adult educational levels ranged from 0 to 13 years of schooling with a mean of 4.9 years as can be seen in Table IV. This accounts for some of the difficulties that a family faces if the parents are unable to find permanent jobs because they lack the minimal high school

TABLE IV
Mean Number of Years of Education of Adults
in Kansas Migrant Sample

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>
Migrant	3.8	3.025
Non-migrant	5.8	3.056
Resident farmworker	4.3	3.206
Non-farm resident worker	6.2	2.958
Total	4.9	3.224

education. In addition language problems may present another barrier to further education among those who are predominantly Spanish-speaking. For the migrant, the mean number of years of schooling was 3.8 and for the non-migrant it was 4.3. So that among farmworkers generally, the migrant is clearly at the bottom of an already low educational stratum.

Language Facility

The survey showed that 16.3 percent of the families only spoke Spanish, whereas 76.3 percent claimed to speak or understand both languages adequately. In this latter group, however, Spanish was the first language and was used in the home. Consequently, these figures do not indicate bilingual fluency but rather reflect an ability to use the second language, English, as needed and at the minimal level required to function as an economic unit. The data raise some questions with respect to language usage. Is one bilingual if his primary reliance is on Spanish and if English is used only at a minimum to meet economic requirements? Finally, only 7.3 percent (18 families) said that they used English completely and exclusively (see Table V).

TABLE V
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
by Language Facility

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Both</u>
Migrant	14.0	3.5	82.5
Non-migrant	18.3	10.6	71.1
Resident farmworker	11.1	3.7	85.2
Non-farm resident worker	20.2	12.5	67.3
Total	16.3	7.3	76.3

It is difficult to determine from these data the extent to which the Spanish language has influenced the migrant experience, although it is clear that the difference in language has a major impact on migrant lives. This impact may be hard to appreciate for those with the language facility and competence characteristic of the English-speaking majority in Kansas. Nevertheless, such language differences among migrants contribute to their difficulty in obtaining an education, a job, and meeting basic needs (see Tables VI and VII). A language difference also serves to segregate a group from the mainstream of society by virtue of the communication barrier it creates. It may also engender feelings of apprehension and caution toward the English-speaking society. The net result may have a negative and alienating effect on migrant life and migrant perceptions of the broader society. To some extent the language barrier problem reflects on the larger society. Except for the Title I migrant schools mentioned earlier, the absence of general bilingual educational programs suggests that in Kansas the burden of adjustment falls to the migrant. The larger society evidences no mechanisms for facilitating these adjustments through the educational system.

This language exclusion serves to socially unite Spanish-speaking migrant families and to preserve their sense of community even though they lead a nomadic life. The Spanish language serves as an integrative force in a life style characterized by constant change and mobility. Those who speak Spanish usually do so because they prefer the language and its attendant culture. The effect of Spanish language dominance is to preserve a parallel culture for migrant families. This linguistic/cultural preference makes English a language of trade, but not a language of social importance within the migrant social structure. This is evident in Table VIII. Note that even the English-speaking families preferred that their children continue to learn the Spanish language and to study the Mexican culture.

TABLE VI
Kansas Migrant Sample Distributed by Language Facility
and Mean Years of Education of Adult Members

<u>Language facility</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>
Spanish	3.8	2.745
English	8.3	3.786
Both Spanish and English	4.8	3.063

TABLE VII
Kansas Migrant Sample Distributed by Language Facility
and Percentage of Basic Needs Indicated

<u>Basic needs</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Both</u>
Jobs	90.0	94.4	86.1
Legal services	87.5	94.4	81.8
Educational programs	80.0	77.8	77.5
Health services	80.0	94.4	73.8
Loans	82.5	77.8	80.7
Interpreters	82.5	88.9	77.0

TABLE VIII
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
by Their Attitudes About Their Children in Regard to Language
and Culture According to Language Facility

	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Both</u>
Prefer that their children			
use Spanish	60.0	33.3	64.7
Prefer that their children learn in			
Spanish (in school)	72.5	88.9	78.6
Prefer that their children learn			
about Mexican culture	80.0	83.3	84.5

Religion

Religious preference for the sample families is presented in Table IX. Ninety-one percent of the families were Catholic; 7.8 percent indicated that they were Protestant—usually Baptist or Jehovahs Witness—and 1.2 percent indicated some other or no religious affiliation. Although the numbers of Catholics is overwhelming, little can be said about the effects of religious differences on attitudes and their relation to the demographic characteristics of Kansas migrants based on the data. It would be difficult to obtain a control group of adequate size to test the effects of religion on Chicano migrant workers because most Chicanos are Catholic, regardless of the work they do.

TABLE IX
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
by Religious Preference

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Protestant</u>	<u>None or other</u>
Migrant	91.2	8.8	0.0
Non-migrant	91.0	6.8	2.2
Resident farmworker	88.9	7.4	3.7
Non-farm resident worker .	91.3	6.7	1.9
Total	91.0	7.8	1.2

Employment

The number of employed family members ranged from 0 to 9 with a mean of 1.2 for the total group (see Table X). In the migrant group the range was from 1 to 9 with a 1.3 mean and a 2.006 standard deviation. The irregularity occurs because family members work when they find jobs, and all who are able work in some capacity—part-time, full-time, temporary, farm or non-farm work. Therefore, the “number of employed family members” could vary greatly depending on the date the family was visited. Since work was especially scarce and irregular in the 1972 season it was unusual for all family members to be employed and in some cases it was considered fortunate if even one member of the family could find employment. The range for non-migrant families was only 0 to 4 employed family members while the range for migrant families was 0 to 9 employed family members. Among migrants more of the members of the family are likely to work, a reflection of the role of the migrant family as a work unit. The family among migrants then is an economic as well as a social unit. The purpose of migration by the family

TABLE X
Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Range and Mean Number
of Employed Family Members

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>
Migrant	0-9	1.3	2.006
Non-migrant	0-4	1.1	.883
Resident farmworker	0-3	1.1	.874
Non-farm resident worker ..	0-4	1.1	.884
Total	0-9	1.2	1.513

is to find work and whenever possible all able members work. Because of the low wages paid, as many as possible must work to keep the family economically viable. These data are limited, however, by the fact that it was not possible to distinguish between part-time and full-time employed family members. Further, it should be kept in mind that the migrant family in contrast to the non-migrant family tended to be a little larger.

As can be seen in Table XI, work days varied in number from 0 to 7 per week with an aggregate mean of 4.7 days and a standard deviation of 2.118. These figures show wide variations in weekly work schedules and work availability that make income and new jobs tenuous. Fluctuating work schedules force migrants to move on seeking new jobs and to take short-term or odd jobs to meet the present needs of the family. The data point out that migrants are affected somewhat more acutely by irregular farm work schedules. Migrants worked nearly one day less per week than resident farmworkers. Since the data only indicate that those interviewed were employed on the day they were interviewed and the information given was an estimate of the average job duration, this estimate did not

TABLE XI
Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Mean Number of
Work Days Per Week at Time of Interview

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>
Migrant	0-7	4.7	1.925
Non-migrant	0-7	4.8	2.224
Resident farmworker	0-7	5.5	1.503
Non-farm resident worker ..	0-7	4.6	2.408
Total	0-7	4.7	2.118

allow for in-between periods of unemployment or partial days of work. The following situation in one camp illustrates this point.

In this particular camp none of the families had worked in three weeks. Many were stranded because they had no money for gasoline or food and could not leave. Others had traveled to the area because of a rumor of work. Some had sick children or elderly people with them and this kept them from being able to move on. This camp was twenty miles from any services and no one could afford to go to the nearest town very often because of the cost of gasoline. Although a bus would pick up the children who were going to the migrant school, none in the camp attended the school anymore because they said they did not have adequate clothes and shoes. About twelve families were living in the camp, several crowded into abandoned farm houses with one or more families. These conditions and circumstances while harsh were not unique and they characterize the factors which can trap a migrant family.

All the families in this camp were caught in the trap of an irregular work schedule which penalized those who stayed in one place too long,

hoping that work would begin soon. Some had stayed looking for semi-permanent, non-farm work to carry them over until the expected jobs came along. These were among the reasons given in interviews for remaining in the area even though the likelihood for work was bleak. When a family in this situation runs out of food and money they may have little choice but to remain. Under these circumstances modest savings from low wages cannot meet basic needs for very long, especially for the relatively large migrant family.

The number of work hours per day for the total group ranged from 0 to 16 with a mean of 7.8 hours and a standard deviation of 3.479 (see Table XII). This measure also reflects the irregularity of work and income. The migrants' mean work day was 8.0 hours while the non-migrants' work day averaged 7.7 hours. The group with the largest average number of hours of work was the resident farmworker reporting 10.1 hours per day. The figures are somewhat deceiving if they are considered in the context of full, normal employment conditions. Seasonal farm work follows an intermittent work pattern where families must either wait for the crop and suffer interim unemployment or move

TABLE XII

Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Range and Mean Number of Work Hours Per Day at Time of Interview

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>
Migrant	0-15	8.0	3.071
Non-migrant	0-16	7.7	3.472
Resident farmworker	0-14	10.1	2.755
Non-farm resident worker ..	0-16	7.0	3.782
Total	0-16	7.8	3.479

elsewhere to other work. No family can plan ahead with certainty. They must try to second-guess the weather and crop readiness over several counties and states. While awaiting the promise of coming work, they sacrifice new possibilities further along the migrant stream. They must also survive on the thinning reserves they have put aside in savings.

By foregoing newer prospects for the security of staying in one area ~~a little longer, the migrant becomes a~~ readily available source of cheap labor. After going for ~~some time without work, the migrant will accept~~ any wages for the hardest of farm work or odd jobs. Thus, the migrant stream penalizes those who do not keep on going even if they may wish to settle out.

Settling Out

Settling out of the migrant stream is an interesting phenomenon because it is the only permanent solution to the migrant way of life. It is generally considered a desirable alternative, and it may be a technological inevitability. Each year more migrants settle out into permanent residence and employment. Estimates from the Kansas Council of Agricultural Workers and Low-Income Families place the settling out rate at 15 to 30 percent annually. Because of mechanization, migrant labor is becoming obsolete. As jobs are performed by machines people settle out and the remaining migrants increasingly feel the consequences as migrant housing is destroyed and only the worst field jobs are left for the unskilled manual laborers. One difficulty of settling out is that few communities seek migrants as residents and some seem unwilling or unable to help them adjust by providing necessary housing, training, employment, and other services. Of the migrant families questioned on settling out, 57.9 percent of them indicated that they would settle out in Kansas if permanent work were available. A total of 37.7 percent said they would not settle out in Kansas. Of those interviewed 4.4 percent had some other response. None of the families denied that they wanted

to settle out or were planning to do so as soon as possible. To some extent this suggests that for many the problem is how and where to settle out under circumstances of economic security.

Income

The mean income level data contained in Table XIII confirm many observations about the working conditions of farmworkers, both migrant and non-migrant. The average monthly income for the entire sample was \$310.74 with a standard deviation of \$193.95. For migrants the mean was \$277.68; and for non-migrants, \$339.23. Considering the fact that

TABLE XIII
Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Monthly Range
and Mean Family Income at Time of Interview

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>
Migrant	\$0-800	\$277.68	\$198.512
Non-migrant	0-800	339.23	183.024
Resident farmworker	0-500	279.17	150.302
Non-farm resident worker .	0-800	345.64	189.163
Total	\$0-800	\$310.74	\$193.951

the average family size among the migrants surveyed was close to seven, this amount is far below any standard measure of poverty. It provides for less than \$50 per month for each member of the family. The standard deviations and ranges are large because of the variance in job, wage, and number of working days from week to week. Peak season wages and hours, with all members of a family working, could conceivably yield

\$800 for a family of six working all the daylight hours, as was frequently the case. Yet this would be a single exceptional, brief, and intensive period of work. It is not the norm, nor is it work performed under comfortable conditions.

The wage unit for 46.9 percent of the total sample was the hour. Payment by acre of work was the norm for 19.2 percent of the group. For migrants, however, 36.8 percent were paid by acre, 33.3 percent by hour, and 14.9 percent by field row. A higher number, 58 percent of the non-migrants, indicated that they were paid by the hour. Because no standard wage unit exists, it is difficult to establish a rate of migrant pay per wage unit. For migrants the rate varied widely but tended toward work unit bases like the acre or the row, which pay-off when work is done by a family unit. For non-migrants the rate tended to be based on the hour. In short, it is difficult to make any detailed wage rate comparisons among farmworker groups because the work units vary widely. But there is some evidence that migrants tend to get paid more often by some work unit other than the hour.

It should be noted here that because of unemployment the wage unit percentages cited above do not add up to 100 percent. These data were obtained by asking respondents to provide information about income in terms of their current jobs. Another important qualification relates to the data comparing migrants and non-migrants. The data originally gathered by seasonal workers (migrant), resident workers, and non-farm resident workers were collapsed into migrant and non-migrant categories for comparison. There was overlap such that 22.1 percent of the non-migrants and 64.1 percent of the migrants interviewed were farmworkers. The fact that 78.9 percent of the non-migrants were not farmworkers is symptomatic of at least two things: (1) farm work is not steady so people supplement incomes by non-farm work and (2) non-migrants have much greater access to non-farm work. Finally, the unemployment rate among migrants was 13.7 percent or more than

three times the unemployment rate of 4.4 percent among non-migrants. A summary of these data appear in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
by Type of Employment

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Farmworker</u>	<u>Non-farm worker</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>
Migrant	78.9	16.7	4.4
Non-migrant	22.1	64.1	13.7
Resident farmworker	96.3	0.0	3.7
Non-farm resident worker .	2.9	80.8	16.3
Total	48.6	42.0	9.4

Living Conditions

It is difficult to make qualitative distinctions about family living conditions based on the data collected. Using the census method of determining the availability of facilities, and whether they are used by more than one family, proved inconclusive. Of all families, 95 percent or more had access to hot water, cold water, toilet, kitchen, bath, electricity, and gas (see Table XV). However 20.8 percent shared these household facilities with other families. This meant either that more than one family was living in a single-family unit; or as in the camps, several families were sharing central bath facilities. These data do not reflect the physically substandard conditions of most of the rural housing occupied by migrants. Crowding into one or two rooms was common for an entire family, especially in the camps. Here too, families only had access to common facilities which were located outside of the dwelling. Many of

TABLE XV
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
According to Selected Household Facilities

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Cold</u>		<u>Hot</u>		<u>Toilet</u>	<u>Kitchen</u>	<u>Bath</u>	<u>Electricity</u>	<u>Gas</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>Television</u>
	<u>water</u>		<u>water</u>								
Migrant	99.1		94.7		94.7	95.6	94.7	99.1	98.2	12.3	48.2
Non-migrant	97.7		96.2		96.2	97.7	96.2	99.2	96.9	45.0	87.0
Resident farmworker	96.3		96.3		96.3	96.3	96.3	100.0	96.3	37.0	88.9
Non-farm resident worker	98.1		96.2		96.2	98.1	96.2	99.0	97.1	47.1	86.5
Total	98.4		95.5		95.5	96.7	95.5	99.2	97.6	29.8	69.0

these housing units were temporary facilities with four walls, sometimes with pipes and running water. They would hardly be regarded as "housing" on the real estate market.

Brief descriptions of three camps are cited here as examples of the rural housing facilities for seasonal workers. The first, housing 20 families, was a row of cement block, one- and two-room units which had no inside running water. No furniture or appliances were provided and the floors were bare cement. The migrants added makeshift furnishings to whatever they had brought with them in order to create a sleeping, eating, and living environment. A second camp was composed of a series of one-room dilapidated frame cabins. It appeared that at one time these units had been motel cabins or crew quarters. But now they were unfurnished and in poor repair. The third camp was made up of a row of deserted storefronts and houses located near railroad tracks. All units were in deteriorating condition and in an obviously undesirable location, especially for families with children. These are examples of the type of housing that "comes with the contract" for the migrant farmworker.

Perhaps standards are relative but it is doubtful that many families would choose these camps even to "rough it" on a vacation, if given the choice. The migrant, unfortunately, has no choice on the open housing market because of his low income, his short-term tenancy status, and the fact that owners may find it cheaper to destroy marginally adequate housing rather than maintain it in compliance with minimal housing codes. Hence whatever housing is in existence that a migrant can afford is scarce, temporary, and often thrown in as a contract "extra" rather than rented (see Table XVI). The economy of rural agriculture being what it is, this substandard housing is tolerated because it is the only economically feasible housing that is available.

TABLE XVI
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
by Home Ownership

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Rent</u>	<u>Own</u>	<u>Contract provision</u>	<u>Homeless</u>
Migrant	74.6	0.9	24.6	0.0
Non-migrant	73.4	24.4	0.7	1.5
Resident farmworker	70.4	29.6	0.0	0.0
Non-farm resident worker ..	74.0	23.1	1.0	1.9
Total	73.9	13.5	11.8	0.8

Services

Inquiries about service accessibility revealed that among the migrant sample more families knew of the availability of services than had actually used them. But even the knowledge of existing services was limited. Only 58.4 percent of those interviewed knew of the migrant summer school, which was the best known service in the area. The Health Service came next, with 45.7 percent aware of its existence (see Table XVII). In all cases, however, one-half or less of those interviewed used a service once they were aware of it.

The level of service use is of particular significance. All of the services listed except the Food Stamp Program involved agencies with bilingual outreach staffs. Yet contact and use never exceeded 34.7 percent, or about one-third. This was the migrant school and clearly reflects a service for migrant dependents rather than the migrant workers themselves. These data reflect a fundamental degree of separation and alienation of the migrants from available services even under the best of

TABLE XVII
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample According
to Awareness and Use of Various Services

<u>Work-residence status</u>	Awareness of services			
	Kansas			
	<u>Council of Agricultural Workers</u>	<u>Migrant Health Service</u>	<u>Migrant Summer School</u>	<u>Food Stamp Program</u>
Migrant	23.7	42.1	57.0	25.4
Non-migrant	36.6	48.9	59.5	48.1
Resident farmworker	33.3	48.1	74.1	29.6
Non-farm resident worker	37.5	49.0	55.8	52.9
Total	30.6	45.7	58.4	37.6

<u>Work-residence status</u>	Use of services			
	Kansas			
	<u>Council of Agricultural Workers</u>	<u>Migrant Health Service</u>	<u>Migrant Summer School</u>	<u>Food Stamp Program</u>
Migrant	14.0	26.3	36.0	7.0
Non-migrant	12.2	23.7	33.6	17.6
Resident farmworker	11.1	29.6	63.0	3.7
Non-farm resident worker	12.5	22.1	26.0	21.2
Total	13.1	24.9	34.7	12.7

conditions—where bilingual outreach efforts are available. This suggests that only major outreach efforts providing localized services with increased visibility and availability can alter current conditions.

To see if any differences existed between migrants and non-migrants, the service data were further subdivided. For the migrant the knowledge of services was lower than that of the non-migrant, but agency contact was higher than contact among non-migrants—except for the Food Stamp-Program which has its own eligibility requirements. The low knowledge of services coupled with higher contact by the migrant group means that proportionally fewer migrants hear about services, but those who do take advantage of them more frequently than non-migrants. In addition the explicit bilingual outreach efforts are aimed at migrants and so they do have an effect. Finally, non-migrants may well need some of these services less but are somewhat more informed about them because of their more stable residency patterns and familiarity with the area.

Residency requirements affect service use because they are frequently employed to determine eligibility. Programs may distinguish between intrastate and interstate migrants, or treat length of residency in the state as an eligibility criterion.

Since service or welfare programs are geared to help the indigent, they may have an unanticipated effect on migrants. To qualify people must often show complete poverty. If they can in anyway be self-sustaining, they do not qualify for aid. The migrant family who elects to settle out is usually choosing to move from poverty to some level of economic self-sufficiency. But in the interim between leaving the migrant stream and settling down into the local economy some form of aid is needed to assist families in finding housing, jobs, and satisfying other basic needs. Once they settle out they lose aid they could receive as migrants. To some extent then, residency and status requirements serve to penalize those who would choose to become more stable and

self-sufficient. In this sense they can be said to keep people in the migrant stream.

Where do migrants get their information about services? The data in Table XVIII show that of the 245 families in the total group, 60.0 percent had learned of the services from a friend and 20.4 percent of them had never heard of any of the services listed. In most cases, then, it was not the agency that contacted the families directly to inform them of available services. Agency outreach personnel are evidently ineffective as prime sources of direct information about services. Given earlier references to migrant apprehension about authorities it is clear that friends and neighbors are the major sources of service information. In addition, since there are no marked differences between migrants and non-migrants, it can be said that farmworkers in general depend more on their neighbors than they do on government or agency officials for their information about public services. If service agencies are to improve, major efforts at localizing agency outreach activities are essential and preferable in an informal and neighborly context. The "other" responses listed in the table usually referred to the local priest, a local non-service agency official, an employer, or a merchant.

While these data could be taken as evidence that migrant service agencies are not effective, several qualifications are essential. The agencies listed never evidenced a lack of work or activity. What may well be a factor is the staffing levels of these agencies. All were understaffed and had full work-loads handling existing cases. Understaffing may well contribute as much to low usage as migrant reticence toward government-related activities.

Needs

Of the six basic services studied in the survey, jobs and legal services were most often cited as needed. As Table XIX reports, the other four—education, health service, loans and interpreters—were also

TABLE XVIII
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample According to Their
Source of Information About Social Services

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Health worker</u>	<u>Community aide</u>	<u>Friend</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Other</u>
Migrant	21.9	6.1	4.4	58.8	5.3	3.5
Non-migrant	19.0	2.3	6.9	61.1	3.1	7.6
Resident farmworker	11.1	0.0	11.1	74.1	3.7	0.0
Non-farm resident worker..	21.2	2.9	5.8	57.7	2.9	9.6
Total.....	20.4	4.1	5.7	60.0	4.1	5.7

TABLE XIX
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample
by Reported Needs

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Jobs</u>	<u>Legal services</u>	<u>Loans</u>	<u>Interpreters</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Health</u>
Migrant	86.8	78.1	75.4	78.1	73.7	72.8
Non-migrant	87.8	88.5	85.5	79.4	81.7	79.4
Resident farmworker	88.9	88.9	88.9	85.2	92.6	81.5
Non-farm resident worker	87.5	88.5	84.6	77.9	78.5	78.8
Total	87.3	83.7	80.8	78.8	78.0	76.3

considered as needs by most of those interviewed. There were no evident differences among migrants and non-migrants with regard to needs.

The profile of needs is striking. Jobs were mentioned first. After jobs came the need for legal services, presumably to cope with the problems faced by an itinerant, economically marginal person. Loans followed, underscoring the essentially unviable and inadequate financial situation faced by the farmworker. After these came the social and physical needs: interpreters to help in their interaction with the broader community, schools, and health services. The overwhelming agreement evidenced by the data provide an obvious list of areas where service programs are essential to meet the problems of the farmworkers and migrant condition.

Attitudes

Do the migrant farmworkers have attitudes and aspirations which are different from non-migrants? Several attitudinal questions were included in the questionnaire to provide some useful insights. The migrant and non-migrant groups generally gave very similar responses to the questions asked.

On the matter of how much education they think an individual needs today, most responses were "high school" and "college," with high school the majority response. This is shown in Table XX.

When asked what level of education they thought their children would receive, the majority thought that their children would get a high school education. The second highest response was "college," although fewer thought their children would get through college than had indicated their children needed a college education. While many think that a college education is needed, not as many believe that it is an attainable goal for their children. It is interesting to note that although the differences are not great, migrants as a group had the lowest levels of expressed needs and expectations among those studied (see Table XXI).

TABLE XX
 Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by the Amount
 of Education They Think an Individual Needs Today

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Grade school</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	0.0	1.8	64.0	32.5	1.8
Non-migrant	0.0	0.8	55.0	43.5	0.8
Resident farmworker	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Non-farm resident worker	0.0	1.0	51.9	46.2	1.0
Total	0.0	1.2	59.2	38.4	1.2

TABLE XXI
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by the Amount
of Education They Expect Their Children Will Attain

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Grade school</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	0.9	1.8	68.4	28.1	0.9
Non-migrant	0.8	1.5	60.3	35.9	1.5
Resident farmworker	0.0	0.0	74.1	25.9	0.0
Non-farm resident	1.0	1.9	56.7	38.5	1.9
Total	0.8	1.6	64.1	32.2	1.2

When asked if they thought their children would have problems in school, most parents did not think so. As Table XXII points out, migrant parents seemed more apprehensive (41.2 percent) than non-migrant parents (33.6 percent).

TABLE XXII
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Whether They
Expect Their Children Will Experience Problems in School

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	41.2	57.0	1.8
Non-migrant	33.6	64.1	2.3
Resident farmworker	33.3	63.0	3.7
Non-farm resident worker	33.7	64.4	1.9
Total	37.1	60.8	2.1

Because this sample is predominantly Mexican-American, parents were asked about language training in schools. More than three-fourths of the parents wanted their children to learn in Spanish and for Spanish to be used in the classroom. This question was included to determine whether parents approved of the bilingual methods being used in the migrant school program. An overwhelming majority approved and placed value on the use of Spanish (see Table XXIII).

TABLE XXIII

Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Desire for Spanish
to be Taught to Their Children in School

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	76.3	23.7	0.0
Non-migrant	80.2	16.8	3.1
Resident farmworker	85.2	11.1	3.7
Non-farm resident worker	78.8	18.3	2.9
Total	78.4	20.0	1.6

When asked if they wanted their children to use Spanish as the principle language, most parents indicated that they did, as can be seen in Table XXIV. This is to be expected of parents who speak Spanish or in bilingual families. The general agreement on this question is an important indication of a desire to maintain the Spanish language among migrant respondents. As the data show, 66.7 percent of the migrants preferred Spanish in contrast with 57.3 percent of the non-migrants. As Table VIII has already shown, preference for the use of Spanish was higher among Spanish-speaking families (60.0 percent) than among English speakers (33.3 percent). But regardless of language facility parents wanted their children to learn Spanish in school (72.5 percent among Spanish-speakers and 88.9 percent among English-speakers).

TABLE XXIV
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by the Desire for
Their Children to Use Spanish as Their Principal Language

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	66.7	30.7	2.6
Non-migrant	57.3	40.5	2.3
Resident farmworker	59.3	37.0	3.7
Non-farm resident worker	56.7	41.3	1.9
Total	61.6	35.9	2.5

Does this language preference carry over into a cultural preference? The data in Table XXV show that most parents wanted their children exposed to Mexican culture in school. The percentages for all groups were higher on this than for wanting their children to learn Spanish.

The evidence of migrant distance from government and authorities has already been referenced in the analysis. To determine migrant and non-migrant perceptions of authorities and government, several questions about current conditions were used. Respondents were asked if they thought the government was trying to help them. Most respondents

TABLE XXV
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by the Desire for Their
Children to Learn Mexican Culture in School

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	86.0	14.0	0.0
Non-migrant	81.7	16.8	1.5
Resident farmworker	85.2	11.1	3.7
Non-farm resident worker	80.7	18.3	1.0
Total	83.7	15.5	0.8

thought so (see Table XXVI). Migrants were somewhat more positive or supportive (82.5 percent) than non-migrants (70.2 percent). This conflicts with previous interpretations in this analysis and with the data about the use of government services and seeing authorities as sources of direct information. Apparently in theory migrants saw the government as generally trying to be helpful. But this attitude was independent of actual migrant behavior with respect to the use of available government services.

This diffuse support of the government reflects a general reservoir of good will toward the abstract government on the part of migrants. It points out the degree to which the potential for more effective interaction exists and indicates the need for the creation of corresponding levels of specific support based on particularized contacts with specific governmental service agencies.

Respondents were asked if they thought good or bad changes were taking place in Kansas in order to determine if attitudes were any different when a more specific and closer level of government was

TABLE XXVI
 Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Whether or Not
 They Feel the Government is Trying to Help Them

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	82.5	13.2	4.4
Non-migrant	70.2	22.1	7.6
Resident farmworker	66.7	29.6	3.7
Non-farm resident worker	71.2	20.2	8.7
Total	75.9	18.0	6.1

involved. The level of response was still quite general, with more people thinking there were no bad changes taking place than thought good changes were occurring. The term "good" was taken to mean things that the respondents found generally acceptable and felt made them better off; and "bad," things that were not acceptable or made life more difficult. On the whole migrants were more likely to perceive changes in Kansas as being good (60.5 percent) than were non-migrants (47.3 percent) as Table XXVII shows.

Could it be that migrants are just more optimistic and tend on a general level to view the world positively even though their living situations are difficult and marred by poverty? To determine this, all respondents were asked if they thought people could, generally speaking, work together to solve their problems. Most said they did, and interestingly enough migrants were relatively less optimistic (78.9 percent) than non-migrants (86.3 percent). Migrants as a group had positive attitudes and were inveterate optimists in spite of the fact that

TABLE XXVII
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Their
Attitudes About Changes Taking Place in Kansas

<u>Work-residence status</u>	Do you think there are good changes taking place in Kansas?		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	60.5	26.3	13.2
Non-migrant	47.3	37.4	15.3
Resident farmworker	48.1	33.3	18.5
Non-farm resident worker	47.1	38.5	14.4
Total	53.5	32.2	14.3

<u>Work-residence status</u>	Do you think there are bad changes taking place in Kansas?		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	14.0	73.7	12.3
Non-migrant	13.7	75.6	10.7
Resident farmworker	11.1	77.8	11.1
Non-farm resident worker	14.4	75.0	10.6
Total	13.9	74.7	11.4

they were less likely to be openly positive about the ability of people to work together and solve their problems (see Table XXVIII).

TABLE XXVIII
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Whether They
Think People Can Work Together to Solve Their Problems

<u>Work-resident status</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	78.9	16.7	4.4
Non-migrant	86.3	13.0	0.8
Resident farmworker	81.5	14.8	3.7
Non-farm resident worker	87.5	12.5	0.0
Total	82.9	14.7	2.4

Taken together these attitudinal measures suggest that these migrants have a general supportive and positive view of government and the changes it induces in Kansas, while being less prone than non-migrants to take a rosy view of cooperative problem-solving among people.

Finally, all respondents were asked if they thought things would generally be better or worse for their children. Over 70 percent of all respondents saw a brighter future for their children. Between 14 and 15 percent felt that things would not change much. Less than 10 percent felt things would be worse (see Table XXIX). A profile of hopeful optimism is reflected here, with little difference between migrants and

TABLE XXIX
Percentage Distribution of Kansas Migrant Sample by Their Feelings
About Their Children's Future Life in Relation to Their Own

<u>Work-residence status</u>	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Migrant	78.1	7.0	14.0	0.9
Non-migrant	71.8	9.2	15.3	3.7
Resident farmworker	51.9	18.5	22.2	7.4
Non-farm resident worker ..	76.9	6.7	13.5	2.9
Total	74.7	8.2	14.7	2.4

non-migrants. What is most significant is the absence of a sense of fatalism in spite of the social and economic deprivation which surrounds the migrant condition. Clearly the potential exists for more effective government response to the reservoir of support and positive-thinking present among the Kansas migrants.

AN INTERPRETIVE SUMMARY

Any survey of a mobile population is difficult. With mobility and transience, locating respondents becomes quite complicated. In the case of migrants the problem is compounded by short periods of residency accentuated by rapid peaks and declines as crops ripen and the weather changes. In the three summer months of field work the project staff became oriented with the migrant area, visited each of the four regions served by the offices of the Kansas Council of Agricultural Workers and Low-Income Families at least twice, and covered as many other sections with migrant concentrations as were possible, given the existing contacts. For this reason, this is as reliable a pilot study of the migrant area in Summer 1972 as was feasible under field circumstances.

It was estimated by the service agencies in the region that 1,500 families would come through Western Kansas in the migrant stream during the summer months of 1972. Based on this estimate, the sample of 245 families (with 6.6 members per family) seems adequate. Neither county officials nor city clerks would volunteer any estimates as to the total number of migrants in the areas studied. The project staff estimated that the 245 family sample comprised approximately 15 percent of the total group of summer migrants in Western Kansas, if the 1,500 family estimate is a reasonable one.

The *1971 Annual Progress Report* of the Western Kansas Migrant Health Project estimated the migrant population (workers and dependents) of Western Kansas for June, July, and August, 1971 at 13,324.² Projected annual reduction in the migrant population is estimated at approximately 20 percent or more due to settling out. This placed the 1972 migrant population at about 10,500 individuals, not too

² *Eighth Annual Progress Report*, Western Kansas Migrant Health Project, Kansas State Dept. of Health, 1971, p. 60.

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different from the 9,900, the number one would expect if the 1,500 family estimate for the year is reasonable, and one presumes an average of 6.6 persons per family.

Stories about the migrant condition have been available for some time. But a careful documentation of the Kansas migrant condition had not been accomplished. While the data presented here describe the Kansas migrant, they also convey nuances about the qualitative conditions which make up the Kansas migrant experience.

Several qualitative aspects of the migrant experience are worth noting. One is that many families travel in groups of from 2 to 20 or more from their home communities in Texas to migrant camps in Kansas. In some cases this seasonal occurrence transplants an entire community intact. Usually such groups are led and organized by a crew chief who is a working member of the group. He arranges for work contracts and plans for that group. Families sometimes are at the mercy of an unscrupulous crew chief who acts as their work broker. As a broker he can absorb a portion of their wages in the exchange that takes place from the grower to the worker. This study did not collect data on crew chiefs because they were hard to identify and few workers were willing to direct the project staff to them.

Insights into the details and processes of migrant life are not easy to come by without first-hand knowledge of the migrant experience. However, in one case a young woman interviewed in a camp freely explained the camp work system there. The anecdote is presented here to convey the infrastructure of migrant life. This particular migrant group consisted of twenty families most of whom were related, and all were from the same town in southern Texas. Her father-in-law, an elderly man, was the crew chief. He organized and brought them to Kansas each year. She had been coming with the group each summer for eight years and some of the older people in the group had been coming for as many as twenty-two years. They hoed, weeded, and thinned the beets in the summer months; returned to Texas in August; and then came back to

Kansas in October to harvest the sugar beets. All able-bodied adults worked in the fields from sunrise to sunset and the older women stayed behind with the children. Children were everywhere in the camp; none were ever left behind. This woman, 23 years of age, had six children ranging in age from seven years to six months, and she worked every day in the fields. The social structure of the camp was fascinating; all members contributed to the functioning of the camp as a single unit. It is an underlying infrastructure of the migrant life style such as the one described that provides for its endurance.

Poverty has been a national concern and an area of study in recent years, yet knowledge of migrants and their life experiences are still scarce. This may be due in part to the myopic view that poverty is an urban phenomenon. Migrants tend to live and work in rural, sparsely populated areas, and are therefore easily overlooked. Because they are mobile they rarely stay concentrated in an area long enough to be noticed. There is no intensive program of a national scope to serve them that is comparable to programs for other poverty groups. Politically, migrants are formally no one's constituents, and since their stay is usually temporary, no state is committed to systematically providing for them.

Because of mechanization, migrants are a group that gets smaller each year. This may lend itself to the attitude that the problem will eventually solve itself. The fact is that the migrant is still an important part of the work force, at least important enough in some quarters to lead to specific legislation in the form of the legal prohibition of strikes among agricultural workers. Unfortunately similar statutory provisions to cope with the conditions of migrant poverty are not in evidence.

As Americans, migrants may well epitomize the work ethic of this country. Their entire lives are shaped by their hand labor and hard work. There was no evidence in Western Kansas that migrants are lazy, unproductive individuals who sit back to collect welfare checks. The migrants studied were working people who in fact travel many miles to

find work, and are never eligible for welfare because they are non-residents wherever they work. Unlike other poor groups, they tend to travel and function as family units and the family provides for social integration and control as well as for survival in the migrant world.

There are no local agencies formally charged with a responsibility for migrants. Local government agencies do little to effect systematic interaction with migrants, even informally. Without such interaction there is no local awareness of migrant needs, and without awareness there is no response.

One way to cope with the migrant situation would be for local governments to offer services to migrant families on a continual basis in the same way that these services are made available to the rest of the population. County health care is one example of a service which could, with an outreach effort, provide some sustained health care and preventive services. Another approach might be through establishing a local clearinghouse for information, referral, and other sources which provide the migrant with access to emergency sources of food and clothing. It could also coordinate service agencies that have outreach programs for migrants. Newcomers to any area need to know immediately how to obtain goods and services. Volunteer agencies like the "Welcome Wagon" often perform this function for the broad society. Clearly some similar local unit could undertake such a function for the migrant population. In addition, state employment agencies should register migrants as a special work group with special residency status in order to provide job contact services and to aid specifically in the settling out process.

The most profound aspect of migrant life is the social and economic separation that results in *de facto* segregation. The migrants studied were Mexican-American and their distinctively different language, culture, and color is accentuated by their residential relegation to remote sections of a town or the migrant camp. In their work situation they must settle for the stoop labor and seldom operate any farm machinery. This job

discrimination keeps them from gaining new skills basic to improving their value as laborers. Except as tenant farmers it is difficult for them to settle out-of-the-stream into a community and find adequate housing and employment. They feel stigmatized and excluded because they speak Spanish. They are ostracized for lack of skills, and in some areas public facilities, restaurants, and recreation facilities are not easily accessible to them.

These qualitative factors of poverty and exclusion mean that what the migrant needs most is access to the general social, economic and political life. Broader use and acceptance of bilingual education programs will facilitate entrance into the broader society. Job-training programs are essential to improve skill levels and provide access for the migrant to the mechanized sector of the economy. Political access can only come through extension by elected officials of the concept of their constituents to include the migrant citizen—whose attitudes toward government are positive and supportive.

For the majority society, access comes naturally. It comes through the use of the English language, the schools, the neighborhood and the contacts and skills gained through stable employment. Affluence helps, making people less dependent on society. The migrant has none of these. Political access is provided through voting, political party membership and pressure group inducement especially among the working class. Residency requirements exclude migrants from voting and party membership. In the economic sector, without unionization they are excluded from effective interest articulation.

So it is that the access which comes naturally to most members of the broader society comes not at all to the migrant. Shut out, the migrant retains the positive view already described while facing the contradictions of poverty. This general belief in people and trust in government clashes with the everyday frustration of hunger and unemployment. The result is a sense of confusion and withdrawal

powerfully portrayed by the Mexican-American poet, Rodolfo Gonzales, in the opening lines of "I Am Joaquin":

I am Joaquin,
 Lost in a world of confusion,
 Caught up in a whirl of an
 Anglo society,
 Confused by the rules,
 Scorned by attitudes,
 Suppressed by manipulations,
 And destroyed by modern society.

My fathers
 have lost the economic battle
 and won
 the struggle of cultural survival.
 And now!

I must choose
 Between
 the paradox of
 Victory of the spirit,
 despite physical hunger
 Or

to exist in the grasp
 of American social neurosis,
 sterilization of the soul
 and a full stomach.

Yes,
 I have come a long way to nowhere,
 Unwillingly dragged by that
 monstrous, technical
 industrial giant called
 Progress
 and Anglo success . . .

I look at myself.
 I watch my brothers.
 I shed tears of sorrow.
 I sow seeds of hate.
 I withdraw to the safety within the
 Circle of life . . .

MY OWN PEOPLE

This withdrawal serves to keep the channels of access closed and ironically contributes to perpetuating the migrant plight.

APPENDIX

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

Date _____

County _____

Town _____

Permanent Address _____

CHICANO _____

MIGRANT WORKER _____

MEXICANO _____

LOCAL FARM
RESIDENT _____

OTHER _____

LOCAL NON FARM
RESIDENT _____

My name is _____ and I am helping the Kansas Council this summer by interviewing families in this area, such as yourself, to find out what types of programs we should have next year to better help our people here. We would like to find out a few things about your family, your work, and your home.

All our interviews will be confidential and no name will be written on our forms. May I speak with you awhile about yourself and your family and perhaps explain some of the services we have at the Kansas Council?

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	SEX	MARITAL STATUS		PLACE/BIRTH	CITIZENSHIP		HIGHEST GRADE	SCHOOL IN/OUT			LANGUAGE			RELIGION		EMPLOYMENT								
		M	F		M	W		D	S	N	US	Mex	Oth	In	Out	Sp	Eng	Both	Cath	Prot	Full	Part	Retir	Unempl
Head of Household																								
	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
2	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
3	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
4	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
5	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
6	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
7	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
8	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
9	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
0	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
1	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4
2	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3		1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

FAMILY

F1) How long has your family lived in this area?

1 mo	1 yr
2 mo	2 yr
3 mo	3 yr
4 mo	4 yr
5 mo	5 yr
6 mo	more
6-12 mo	than 6

F2) (If less than 5 yr) Where did you move here from? _____

F3) (If less than 12 mo) What other areas do you work during the year?

County and State	Date (months)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

F4) How long have you been working in these areas? _____

F5) Where do you plan to go from here? _____

F6) Would you stay in Kansas if you could find permanent employment?

YES _____ NO _____

F7) How many other Mexican families would you estimate are in this area?

Number of Families	Area (by town/county/field)
_____	_____
_____	_____

F8) How many of these families that you know of are migrants? _____

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

SERVICES

S1) Do you know of the following agencies and their programs?

S2) And have you contacted them?

	<u>KNOW OF:</u>		<u>CONTACTED THEM:</u>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Kansas Council of Agricultural Workers	1	2	1	2
Migrant Health Services	1	2	1	2
Migrant Summer School	1	2	1	2
Mental Health Clinic	1	2	1	2
Food Stamp Program	1	2	1	2
Welfare Department	1	2	1	2
Kansas State Employment	1	2	1	2

S3) How did you hear of these services? Health aide _____
 Community aide _____
 Friend _____
 Agency
 Information _____
 Other (specify) _____

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

SERVICES (continued)

S4) What kind of services did you receive?

	<u>Financial</u>	<u>Further Referral</u>	<u>Participa- tion in Programs</u>	<u>Advice</u>	<u>Other (specify)</u>
Kansas Council of Agricultural Workers	1	2	3	4	5
Migrant Health Services	1	2	3	4	5
Migrant Summer School	1	2	3	4	5
Mental Health Clinic	1	2	3	4	5
Food Stamp Program	1	2	3	4	5
Welfare Department	1	2	3	4	5
Kansas State Employment	1	2	3	4	5

S5) What other types of services for our people do you feel are needed in this area?

legal _____
 educational _____
 employment _____
 health _____
 financial loans _____
 interpreters _____
 other (specify) _____

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

WORKING CONDITIONS

W1) What is your main occupation, most of the year? _____

Farmworker

Non-Farmworker

1

2

W2) How many days in the week do you work? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

W3) How many hours do you work each day?

less than 4 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

W4) How much do they pay you to work? per day _____

or

per hour _____

or

per row _____

or

per acre _____

W5) Could you estimate your family income per month?
(gross or before taxes)

< 100

100

500

200

600

300

700

400

800

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

LIVING QUARTERS

L1) Do you rent or own your home? Rent Own
 1 2

L2) (If rented) Who owns the house?
 city landlord _____
 realtor _____
 a land company _____
 a farmer _____

L3) Is this building a 1-family unit or for more than one family?
 One More
 1 Than One
 2

L4) How many people are living in the house? _____

L5) Do you have the following facilities?

	Yes	No
Cold piped water	1	2
Hot piped water	1	2
Toilet	1	2
Kitchen	1	2
Bathtub or shower	1	2
Electricity	1	2
Gas	1	2
Telephone	1	2
T.V.	1	2

L6) Are any of these facilities shared with other families? Yes No
 1 2
 (If Yes, specify _____)

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

LIVING QUARTERS (continued)

		Yes	No
L7) Do you have to pay extra for:	Gas	1	2
	Electricity	1	2
	Water	1	2

L8) How many cars are owned by the family?

none 1 2 3 more than 3

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

A1) How much education do you think an individual should try to get?

None	Grade	High	College
1	2	3	4

A2) How far do you think your children will go in school?

None	Grade	High	College
1	2	3	4

- | | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|--|------------|-----------|---|
| A3) Do you think your children will have many problems in school? | 1 | 2 | |
| A4) Do you want your children to be taught in Spanish? | 1 | 2 | |
| A5) Do you want your children to use Spanish as their main language? | 1 | 2 | |
| A6) Do you want your children to be taught Mexican culture in school? | 1 | 2 | |
| A7) Do you feel that the government is trying to help you? | 1 | 2 | |
| A8) Do you believe that any good changes are taking place in Kansas? | 1 | 2 | |
| If yes, specify _____ | | | |
| A9) Do you believe that any bad changes are taking place in Kansas? | 1 | 2 | |
| If yes, please specify _____ | | | |
| A10) Do you think that the efforts of many people working together can solve some of the present problems? | 1 | 2 | |
| A11) Do you believe that things will be better or worse or the same for your children? | B | W | S |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

NEEDS

- N1) Are there needs that you would like us to tell the Council about?
(please specify)
- N2) What would you like to see the Council do to better meet these needs?

KANSAS MIGRANT SURVEY

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS & IMPRESSIONS